

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VT; LE

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH VATICAN ON LEBANESE CRISIS

REF: (A) ROME 124; (B) BEIRUT 205

FOR AMBASSADOR LODGE'S OFFICE

1. CONCUR IN YOUR DISCUSSING LEBANESE SITUATION FURTHER
WITH VATICAN ALONG FOLLOWING LINES, WHICH DIFFER SLIGHTLY
FROM THOSE PROPOSED REF B:

A. AS VATICAN AWARE, THE U.S. SUPPORTS A POLITICAL SOLU-
TION BASED ON MODERATION, CONCILIATION AND COMPROMISE.

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B. WHETHER OUT OF FEAR OF BEING ABANDONED OR FOR TACTI-

CAL REASONS THE CHRISTIAN POSITION AS EXPRESSED BY MANY PROMINENT CHRISTIAN LEADERS APPEARS TO BE QUITE UNYIELDING AND, IN OUR JUDGMENT HAS RENDERED THE SITUATION MORE CRITICAL AND MORE DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE ALONG THE LINES ENVISAGED BY THE VATICAN.

C. WE ARE AWARE THAT THERE IS MUCH SUPPORT FOR THE PARTITION OF LEBANON AMONG THE CHRISTIANS. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT CONSIDER PARTITION A SOLUTION TO LEBANON'S TRAGIC PROBLEM. PARTITION, IN OUR VIEW, WOULD WORK AGAINST THE LONG-TERM CHRISTIAN INTERESTS AND TALK ABOUT PARTITION WORKS AGAINST THEIR SHORT-TERM INTEREST.

D. REGARDING THE QUESTION OF PREDOMINANCE, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE PRINCIPAL MOSLEM GROUPS ARE NOT SEEKING A MAJORITY REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT, BUT EQUAL REPRESENTATION, AND IT WAS RECENT CHRISTIAN MOVES BACKING AWAY FROM THIS CONCEPT AFTER APPEARING TO ACCEPT IT THAT HAS CONTRIBUTED TO RENEWED TENSIONS.

E. OUR AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT HAS MAINTAINED A CLOSE DIALOGUE WITH HIS BEATITUDE THE MARONITE PATRIARCH KHURAISH, ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION.

F. WITH REFERENCE TO OUTSIDE INTERVENTION, THERE IS LITTLE QUESTION THAT BOTH LIBYA AND IRAQI INFLUENCE HAS BEEN QUITE DAMAGING. WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN AMBIGUOUS ASPECTS IN THE SYRIAN POSITION, WE HAVE DISCERNED NUMEROUS POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ASPECTS TO THE ROLE SYRIA HAS PLAYED, ESPECIALLY IN RECENT WEEKS.

G. WE GREATLY APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED OF THE VATICAN'S THINKING ON THIS SAD ISSUE. WE UNDERSTAND FULLY THE VATICAN'S HISTORICAL INTEREST IN THE CHRISTIANS OF LEBANON AND ITS HUMANITARIAN INTEREST IN THE WELFARE OF ALL LEBANESE. WE WELCOME THE EFFORTS OF ALL THOSE IN SEARCH OF A JUST AND EQUITABLE SOLUTION. KISSINGER

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